

Lesson 4: Spiders Catch Prey

ACTIVITY: Spider Fun

Objectives

Students make observations about spiders, naming two kinds of spiders and describing their webs and spiderlings.

Materials

scissors; glue; popsicle sticks; a tissue box; yarn; cutout of trap-door spiders; flour and water; nylon thread; cardboard tube (from paper towels); newspaper; paints or colors; markers; stapler; tape; construction paper; leaves, small sticks; grass; one balloon per child; small brown paper bags

Procedures

Trap-door Spiders

1. Use the tissue box with its lid, to form the trap door for the spider. The spider hides inside the trap (or the box) until it senses through the web that some prey is near.
2. Glue the leaves and small sticks on the sides of the tissue box.
3. Color and then glue the cutout of the trap-door spider on a popsicle stick.
4. Students draw, color and cut out shapes of insects: ants, bees, grasshoppers, flies, etc. (These can also be used for other activities.)
5. Staple pieces of yarn to the insects to dangle close to the opening of the trap door.
6. One student dangles the insect while the the spider pops out of the trap door to get its prey.



Purse-Web Spiders

1. Cut the cardboard paper towel tube in half to make two webs.
2. Make a paper mache mix with the flour and water.
3. Cut the thread into six-inch to eight-inch pieces; dip them in the mix and wrap them around the tube. Let the thread dry.
4. Color the tubes brown (for camouflage). Make the brown paper bags into rocks by stuffing them with newspaper and gluing or stapling them shut.
5. The purse (web) is now ready. Place it on the side of the rocks. The spider digs a hole under the web. When insects get caught in the web, the spider captures them. (Student pretends to be a spider and hides under the rocks [bags]; another student pretends to be an insect. When the "insect" touches the web, the spider captures it. The "spider" pretends to eat the "insect".)

6. Students take turns being the spider and the prey.

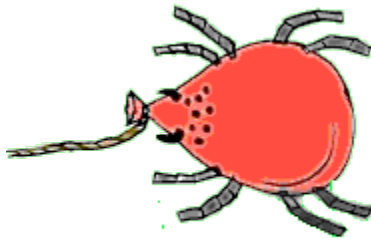
Flower Spiders

1. Each student draws a daisy with a yellow center and white petals.
2. They draw on the white petals a white spider waiting for an insect to come by.
3. The spider waits for the bee, butterfly or other insect to get close enough to it, then it strikes its prey.
4. This spider does not use its web to catch its prey. It relies entirely on its camouflage to deceive the insect.

Spiderlings

Each child blows up a balloon and:

1. counts and makes eight construction paper spider legs
 2. counts and colors in eight eyes at the front of the balloon
 3. makes two fangs on the sides close to the eyes
 4. tapes the eight legs to the spider balloons
 5. tapes a piece of yarn to the spider
 6. hangs the spider from an appropriate place in the classroom.
- Students observe that air currents in the room make the spiderlings sway and float.



Discussion

1. How does the trap-door spider catch its prey? Does it build a web? How do the leaves, sticks and grass help the spider? (The spider senses the vibrations of the leaves and sticks and knows that prey is outside the trap.)
2. How does the purse-web spider catch its prey?
3. A spiderling can use its spinnerets as soon as it is born. The spiderling puts out a silk line called a **dragline**. What do you suppose the spiderling uses this line for? (To catch food.) How does it find food? As the spiderling sways on its line, it can catch prey. This is called **ballooning**. Why?